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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"**

## Statement submitted by Royal Academy of Science International Trust, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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## Statement

**Women's health for development: Beijing+20**

The milestone in which the world has crossed in terms of social, humanitarian and gender related achievements is not only highly significant, but also remarkable as they are the result of extensive research in addition to countless international and national efforts. However to many underprivileged populations and societies, Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control" remains a farfetched target.

The connection between women, health and societal development has been greatly disregarded until recently. National, regional and international efforts are being invested in expanding the scope of women's health beyond reproductive and sexual health because there is more to women's health than the maternal facet of it. Health is perhaps one of the most significant aspects, if not the sole one, where women experience risk factors. Women's health deserves much more attention due to biological and behavioural influences.

The Beijing+20's platform of action includes the promotion and dissemination of research and information on women's health in order to translate knowledge into practice for more effective and efficient results in women's health advancement and development. The breadth and width of Women's health is far from merely being reproductive health and sexual health. Women's health comprises of biological differences in non-communicable diseases. Women's health includes mental well-being. Women's health is affected by lifestyle. Above all Women's health lacks the needed research for tailoring action plans and practices.

We have to acknowledge that there are sex disparities and biological differences in diseases prevailing in both genders, especially non-communicable diseases. According to the World Health Organization, cardiovascular diseases are projected to remain the single leading cause of death. Knowing that cardiovascular diseases are often thought to be a "male" problem, it is the number one killer of women. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, a life threatening lung disease, still affects more women than men due to the biological factor in women participating in the gender's vulnerability towards Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. It is a common fact by now that women are affected by depression more than men. It is not a common fact that in 2012, the World Health Organization named depression to be the second leading cause of death by the year 2020. However, this is not well acknowledged, causing delays in treatment-seeking and diagnosis among women.

After the challenges and the achievements in the Millennium Development Goals, the world now faces yet another challenge: the sustainable development goals and its role in promoting gender equality and empowering women. As civil, scientific, professional, national and international communities there is a huge necessity to create a central strategy that can promote the issue of Women's Health from an awareness into a call to action, now. There is a desperate need for an

investment to support the productivity of society and its development throughout its primary health givers, the Women.

Investing in each woman's health is investing in every family's health, thus promoting and safeguarding the society's health and well-being. As the World Youth Representative for the Royal Academy of Science International Trust, I believe that the call for action shall start now at all community levels including the Youth. The Youth are the leaders of tomorrow. Let's empower and enable our youth to make them agents of change so that our tomorrow becomes today.